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GUIDE
TO THE
DARBAR SAHIB
OR
GOLDEN TEMPLE
OF
AMRITSAR.

BY
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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
The Sikhs and their history... ..	1— 4
Origin and history of the Golden Temple	4— 9
The Clock Tower	9
Regulations for visitors	10—11
The Tank	12—14
The Bungas	14—17
The pavement	17—19
The Great Gateway	20—22
The Causeway	23
The Central shrine	23—31
The Akal Bunga	31—37
The Guru's Garden	37—38
Baba Atal	39—42

GUIDE

TO

THE DARBAR SAHIB OR GOLDEN TEMPLE AT AMRITSAR.



THE SIKHS AND THEIR HISTORY.

The following very brief abstract of the Sikh history and religion may be of value to visitors :

The Sikh religion was founded by **Baba Nanak** (A.D. 1469—1538), who was the first of a series of ten Gurus, or spiritual teachers, *viz.*—

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Bábá Nának, 1469—1538. | 6. Gurn Hargobind, 1606—1645. |
| 2. Gurn Angad, 1538—1552. | 7. Gurn Har Rái, 1645—1661. |
| 3. Gurn Amardás, 1552—1574. | 8. Gurn Har Kishn, 1661—1664. |
| 4. Gurn Bándás, 1574—1581. | 9. Gurn Tegh Bahádur, 1664—1675. |
| 5. Gurn Arjan, 1581—1606. | 10. Gurn Gobind Singh, 1675—1708. |

Bábá Nának's teachings were of the pacific character found in many great religious teachers. In Gurn Arjan's time his followers began to come into conflict with the Moghal authorities at Lahore, and under Gurn Hargobind the conflict became very marked. Finally, under **Gurn Gobind Singh**, the Sikhs became a distinct organization on martial lines in direct conflict with the existing Mahomedan Government.

During the decay of the Moghal power between 1708 and 1800 the Sikhs were divided into a number of independent confederacies, who extended their sway over the whole Punjab. The best known of these confederacies or **Misls** were :

The Bhangís.
The Rámgarhiás.
The Kanhiás.

The Ahluwáliás.
The Phúlkians.
The Sukarchakiás.

The author has the honour to be descended from the chiefs of the Rámgarhiás: while from the Ahluwáliás is descended the royal house of Kapúrthala, and from the Phúlkians are derived the royal houses of Patiála, Jind and Nábha. To the Sukarchakiás belonged **Ranjit Singh**, who gradually acquired a predominating position among the Sikh chiefs, and reigned from 1801 to 1839 as Mahárája of Lahore and the greater part of the Punjab and Kashmir. His death was followed by court factions, and the army having got out of control a rupture with the British power ensued, which led to the annexation by the latter of the Jálandhar Doab in 1846 and of the rest of the Punjab in 1849.

The Sikh troops, which were largely disbanded after annexation, rallied to the British cause during the Mutiny of 1857, and have ever since formed the backbone of the Indian army.

The Sikhs have two sacred books, *viz.*, (1) the **Granth** (*lit.* Book)—also known as the **Ádi-Granth** or **Ad-Granth** (*i.e.* Original Book)—which was compiled by the 5th Guru, Arjan, and which contains the spirit of the teaching of Guru Nának, and (2) the **Daswin Padshah ka Granth** (or Book of the 10th Guru),

which was composed by Guru Gobind Singh and is of a much more martial character.

The former Book is by far the more widely read and worshipped; but the true Sikh—or Singh—is a follower of all the ten Gurus and a spiritual adherent of Guru Gobind Singh. In outward matters the following are the chief characteristics of Sikhism as thus understood :

(a) The Sikh is a monotheist and puts aside idol worship.

(b) He is initiated by a form of baptism, known as the **pahul**, into the religious common wealth (**Khalsa**) of the Sikhs; he reverences the Gurus, and venerates the Granths.

(c) He is commonly considered as free to drink wine* and he may eat meat (other than beef), but animals slaughtered for food must be killed by a single cut (*jhatka*) on the back of the neck. *He must not smoke tobacco.*

(d) Strictly speaking, he should wear five articles beginning with *k*, which are known as the five **kakkas**, viz., the *kes* (uncut hair), the *kanghí* (comb), the *kara* (steel wristlet), the *kirpán* (sword) and the *kachh* (short drawers). Of these, the first—viz., the prohibition to cut the hair—is the most essential.†

* In the Panjabi dialects the spoken language of the Sikhs, wine is called 'Dárú,' i.e. medicine, which apparently signifies that it should be used as such.

† Fuller information on the subject will be found in works such as Ibbetson's 'Ethnography of the Punjab', Trumpp's 'Translation of the Adi-Granth', McGregor's 'History of the Sikhs', Cunningham's 'History of the Sikhs', Muhammad Latif's 'History of the Punjab', Griffin's 'Punjab Rajas', etc.

The following are the leading statistics of interest in connection with the Sikhs :—

	Number (in 1901).	Percentage on total population.
Sikhs in India ...	2,195,239	·7
„ in the Punjab and N.-W. Frontier ...	2,130,987	7·9
„ in the Punjab, including Native States ...	2,102,896	8·5
„ in the Punjab, excluding Native States ...	1,517,019	7·5
„ in Amritsar District ...	264,329	25·8
„ in Amritsar City ...	17,860	11·0

ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE GOLDEN TEMPLE.

There is said to be a Hindu tradition mentioned in the Bhavishyat Purána to the effect that in old times there was somewhere between the Rávi and Biás rivers a sacred pool known as the 'Amrit Kund', i.e. the 'pool of nectar' or 'of immortality', which was a subject of contention between the gods and the demons.* This pool is identified by Hindus and Sikhs with the 'Amritsar' or 'tank of immortality'†, which now constitutes the centre of Sikh worship; but the present importance of the tank is believed to date from the time of the first Sikh Guru, Bábá Nának (A.D. 1469—1538). The story is that Nának, while resting in the neighbouring village of Tung, asked a man called Buddha, who was herding cattle, to bring him some water in a vessel from a tank close by, which occupied the site of the present Golden Temple.

* Reference may be made to the Suraj Prakásh of Bhai Santokh Singh, III. 3, iv. The unimaginative resolve this into a contest between the Aryans and the aborigines for a pool surrounded by trees—a useful strategic point in the days when the land around was desert.

† Some say that the original form of the name was 'Amar-sar' or the 'tank of Amardás', the 3rd Sikh Guru, who was the original founder of the tank, as noticed above.

Buddha said that there was tank at the spot indicated, but that it was dry. Nának said: 'Go and see: the tank is not dry.' Whereon Buddha went and found, to his astonishment, that the tank, which had been quite dry in the morning, was now full of water. Buddha thereupon brought water to Nának and became one of the best known of his disciples.*

No particular attention, however, was paid to the spot till the time of the third Guru, *Amardás*, who chose the site for the present temple on 1st Hár, Sambat 1620 (A.D. 1564). After this (in 1577) the fourth Guru, **Ramdas**, in order to carry out the wishes of his predecessor, obtained the leave of the Emperor Akbar to purchase from the zamindars of Tung for Rs. 700 a plot containing 250 acres of land, which came to be known as Chak Rámdás or Guru ká Chak or Rámdáspur, and in this plot he commenced the excavation of the present tank on the 1st Mágh, Sambat 1634 (**A.D. 1577**). The fifth Guru, *Arjan*, spent a good deal of his time at Amritsar, and commenced the *masonry* construction of the tank on 1st Mágh, Sambat 1645 (A.D. 1588).

One of the legends connected with the digging of the tank runs as follows:—

'Guru Rámdás first began digging a tank at the place where the tank known as Santokh Sar now is, i.e. to the south of the present Town Hall. Deep in the earth he found a chamber closed on four sides. He opened one side and found an old ascetic with long grey hair sitting in a devotional posture. The Guru, who knew the science known as Yoga and the method of restoring breath, reanimated the man, who then fell at his feet and exclaimed: "I shall now obtain salvation. I was longing to see thee, and so, after all, have beheld thee." He then indicated the place where the sacred Amrit Kund existed. Santokh Dev, as this ascetic was called, was shut up again at his own request in the same chamber, and the tank of Santokh Sar was formed over the site.'

* Syad Muhammad Latif's 'History of the Punjab', p. 247. McGregor's 'History of the Sikhs', i. 40.

Another legend, regarding the founding of the temple, runs as follows:—

'The well-known Mahomedan saint *Mían Mír* (1550—1635), who was a friend of Guru Arjan, was present at the foundation of the temple (which is said to have taken place in 1589), and when laying the first brick he laid it crooked. The master mason, who was standing by, could not restrain himself from putting it straight, whereon the Guru exclaimed: 'Master mason, you have done great injury to the temple by moving the brick. The temple will be rebuilt.' A prophecy which was fulfilled in the troublous times of the 18th century, after the temple had been destroyed by Ahmad Sháh Abdálí.'

Míyan Mír

Guru Arjan (who was the compiler of the Granth) is said to have composed the following verses:—

'We have seen all places, but none like thee.
Thou art founded by God, therefore thou art beautiful.
Thou art populated immensely, O unrivalled Rámdáspur.
Nának says: "All sin may be washed off, bathing in Rámdásar the tank."'*

The sixth Guru, **Hargobind**, was installed at the Akál búnga, but did not spend much time in Amritsar; and the remaining four Gurus had little or nothing to do with the place, which is now the recognized centre of Sikhism.

The last Guru, *Gobind Singh*, died in 1708, and shortly afterwards, during the anarchy which attended the break up of the Moghal Empire, the Sikhs divided themselves into a number of political parties known as Misls. These parties, though acting, as a rule, independently of each other, had a common faith in the Guru and a common enmity against the Moghal power, and a custom shortly became established under which the representatives of the various Misls met from time to time in a great National Council or *Gurumata* at the common shrine of Amritsar. Round this shrine, known

*The verses will be found in Rág Srí near the middle of the Granth. They are not contained in Dr. Trumpp's translation.

as the 'Darbár Sahib', the various chiefs built houses for themselves and their followers, and, in some cases, protected their houses by forts. Two annual fairs became established,—the Diwáli in the autumn, and the Baisákhī in the spring,—and men who had complaints to make against the tyranny of the Mahomedan Governors would often appeal to, and obtain aid from, the Sikh Sardárs who assembled at these fairs.

To the Mahomedan Government the establishment of this centre of disaffection was of course extremely distasteful. Fines would be levied on the Sikhs for leave to hold the fairs, or soldiers would be stationed round the shrine to prevent the access of the Sikhs, a reward of Rs. 30 being offered for a Sikh's head. The zeal of the Sikhs for the shrine became all the more intense. 'The Sikh horsemen', says one historian, 'might be seen riding at full gallop to pay their homage at the holy shrine. Some might be slain and some might be captured, but none were ever known to abjure their faith on being captured on their way to that sacred place.' One Mahomedan thánadar, named Massa, made himself particularly obnoxious to the Sikhs by defiling their shrine in an indescribable manner; and one day, when he was sitting on his cot smoking his hooka and enjoying the dancing of nautch girls, he was set upon and slain by two Sikhs, Mahtáb Singh, of Mírankot, and Sukha Singh, Rámgarhia, who approached him in the guise of revenue-payers. The two Sikhs escaped unhurt, but the vigilance of the Mahomedan rulers was redoubled. In 1762 the Afghan conqueror, Ahmad Sháh Abdálí, after defeating the combined body of the Sikhs near Ludhiána in a great battle known as the 'Ghallú Ghára', spent the Diwáli at Amritsar and blew up the sacred shrine with gunpowder, filling the tank with ruins and polluting the precincts in a manner most revolting to Sikh ideas. Sikh legend says that his impiety

did not go unpunished. This great conqueror is known to have died of a terrible cancer in the nose, which for several years had compelled him to hide his face in public darbars; and it is said that this disease originated from a blow inflicted by a brick which hit him in the face while he was superintending the blowing up of the Amritsar shrine.

The efforts of the Mahomedans were of little avail; for within a few years the Sikhs had rebuilt the sacred edifice, special assistance being rendered in this direction by the Ahluwália Sardárs, the ancestors of the present Raja of Kapúrthala. The present building dates mainly from **A.D. 1766**, when the shrine was reconstructed. The Bhangi Misl built two forts, one on the south and the other on the west of the temple. The north side was guarded by the Ahluwália fort, and the eastern side was watched by the Rámgarhiás, who rebuilt their old fort of Rámgarh and constructed a large 'búnga' or resting-place with two lofty towers, from which the approach of an enemy could be discovered. However divided among themselves the Sardárs would meet on common ground at the sacred temple during the great festivals, and many expeditions and plots were planned at these periodical gatherings. With the advent of the power of Mahárāja **Ranjit Singh** (A.D. 1801—1839) the shrine continued to increase in importance, as the Mahárāja paid it very frequent visits, and was accustomed on the occasion of great festivals or any marked success of his armies to contribute liberally to its revenues. On the occasion of the marriage of his son, Prince Nau Nihál Singh, to the daughter of Sardár Shám Singh, of Atárí, in 1837, the ceremony of the investiture of the bridegroom with the bridal chaplet took place in the Harmandar or central shrine, and offerings were made by the Mahárāja to the sacred Granth, to the various 'búngas' and to the devotees present.

*They were very dear
on common religious
cases*

Since the annexation of the Panjab in 1848, the temple has lost none of its importance: it is still the centre of all Sikh devotion, and attracts crowds of worshippers, especially at the two great autumn and spring festivals.

THE CLOCK TOWER.

Visitors on arriving at the temple are first confronted with the **Clock Tower**, a brick structure in the Gothic style, designed by the late Mr. John Gordon, C. E. It was built at the expense of the Municipality on the site of seven old Sikh 'búngas' or hospices, the most famous of which was known as the Atári or edifice of Sadá Kaur, the mother-in-law of Mahárāja Ranjit Singh.* The tower was commenced in 1862 and completed in 1874, at a cost of over Rs. 50,000. It was originally intended to adorn the front of the Town Hall buildings, which were to have been immediately opposite, but the site of the town buildings was afterwards changed, and the tower itself was continued and carried to completion. Though in itself a fine structure, the tower is almost universally condemned as unsuitable to its surroundings; and the wish has sometimes been expressed that the Guru Rámdás should perform another miracle by removing it elsewhere.

From the *platform* an excellent view can be obtained of the temple precincts; and on the night of the autumn festival of the Díwáli, seats are placed on this platform for visitors and others who wish to see the fireworks, which are provided on that evening at the joint expense of the Municipality and the Temple fund†.

* This site was first occupied by a school, and then by a Police Station. Finally the present Clock Tower was built upon it.

† Tickets for seats can be had free of charge from the Municipal Office.

under
Spoken

REGULATIONS FOR VISITORS.

On the right of the clock tower, as one faces the temple, is a low building, in or in front of which visitors are provided with the cloth slippers or 'jurrábs' which must be worn by them in place of boots within the temple precincts. The Government rules, which are reproduced in detail below, require that visitors should remove their boots, that they shall not smoke tobacco in the precincts and that they shall be accompanied by a policeman.* Visitors who wish to sketch should also remember that as the Granth or sacred book in the shrine reposes on the ground, the Sikhs consider it irreverent for any one to sit on a chair within the precincts, and camp-stools, etc., should therefore be avoided. Fortunately there are several flights of steps where any one can sit and obtain good points of view.

The Government regulations are as follows :—

Notice.

All officers and other gentlemen visiting the town of Amritsar are hereby particularly enjoined to take with them either the thanadar, kotwal, or a person deputed by them (whom the bearer of this paper will produce) and to be guided entirely as to their conduct by the advice of these functionaries.

Serious notice will be taken of any act or proceeding done contrary to their remonstrances.

Amongst other customs, it is expected that all visitors will take off their shoes or boots before entering the precincts of the temple, or the walk leading to and fro, or in any other building esteemed sacred by the inhabitants, and which shall be pointed out by the functionaries alluded to above.

If gentlemen consider it as derogatory to their dignity to act in conformity with native usage, they must refrain from indulging their curiosity.

By order of the President at Lahore,
(Sd.) ARTHUR COOK.

LAHORE, 4th August, 1847.

* Similar orders dated 24th March, 1847, and signed by Sir Henry Lawrence, are engraved on a copperplate which is in possession of one of the Granthis.

Notice.

Persons are strictly prohibited from smoking when visiting the tank, Sikh temple, or any other religious buildings in that neighbourhood.

(Sd.) T. MERCER,

Deputy Commissioner.

AMRITSAR, 1st July, 1863.

Visitors who have any complaints to make of inconvenience or ill behaviour during their inspection of the temple should communicate with the Manager or the Deputy Commissioner.

THE TANK.

Before descending from the clock tower platform the visitor should cast his eye over the tank and its surroundings.

The tank is not quite a perfect square, but it is nearly so: the length of the sides at base being 470 feet and at top 510 feet. The depth is 17 feet 5 inches, and water is usually maintained at a depth of 17 feet above the bed level, the resulting volume of water in the tank being a little over four millions cubic feet.

This and the other four sacred tanks in Amritsar* were originally fed with the water which collected in the stiff clay land surrounding them. But this was not a satisfactory arrangement, and the sacred pools at times became offensive or even dried up. It was in 1781 that two Udásís, followers of Sri Chand, son of Guru Nának, named Pritam Dás and Santokh Dás, interested themselves in constructing a branch canal to feed the sacred tanks with fresh water. They repaired an old channel known as the *Haslī*, which had been made from Pathánekot to Majitha in 1639 by Ali Mardán Khán, Viceroy of Lahore, and again let water into it from the Rávi. Out of the Haslī they made a branch leading straight to Amritsar, the actual work being done by the people through whose land it ran, who were forced to do the work by the Udásís sitting *dharna* at their doors, and by destitute people suffering from the effects of the famine of 1783, who were fed in return for their labour.†

Since 1866 the water has been supplied from what is known as the Jethuwál distributary of the Bári Doáb Canal. All the tanks in the city are filled by the Canal Department in return for a fixed sum paid by the Municipality, and the cost of filling the Golden Temple tank (about Rs. 915 per annum) does not fall on the temple

* The five sacred tanks are: Amritsar (at the temple), Kaulsar (see p. 41), Santokh Sar (near the Town Hall: built by Guru Rámdás in 1567), Rám Sar (near the Chátiwind gate, built by Guru Arjan in 1603), and Babek Sar (also near the Chátiwind gate: the 'tank of discrimination between right and wrong').

† See District Gazetteer, 1892-93, p. 156.

funds. The tank is not at any time cleaned out,* but fresh supplies are given quarterly (or oftener if required), the depth of water in the interval between supplies falling from 17 to 12 or 13 feet. The water enters at the north-east corner, and there is an exit to the Kaulsar tank at the south-east corner.†

The tank contains a good many fish (chiefly rohú) and some turtles, but fishing of any kind is of course strictly forbidden. Persons other than Hindus are not, as a rule, supposed to bathe in the tank. In bathing the turban must be removed, and the processes of rubbing the body and rinsing the mouth, which are usual in Hindu bathing-places, are here prohibited; the purpose of bathing in this tank being rather to purify the soul than to cleanse the body. For the latter purpose washing is done at a well before bathing in the tank is commenced.

Many Sikhs and Hindus in Amritsar make a general practice of bathing in the tank daily: those who attend in the morning generally bathe in the tank before proceeding to their devotions. The days held specially sacred for bathing are the first day of the month and the day of the new moon, more especially when this latter falls on a Monday.

Bathing is facilitated by steps which go down into the water along the whole margin of the tank; but there are some special *gháts*, or bathing-places, such as the Har kī paurī ('Steps of God'), Dukh bhanjní ('Destroyer of sorrow'), and Athsath Tírath ('68 places of pilgrimage'),

* That is to say it has not been cleaned out since the time of Mahārāja Sher Singh (1841—43), when one-half of it (the part adjoining the Mánawála búnga) was cleaned. The Mahārāja was killed before the work was finished, and there used consequently to be among certain persons a superstitious disinclination to see the experiment repeated.

† The sides of the tank do not face directly the points of the compass; but for convenience it is assumed in this Guide that the side adjoining the clock tower (which is really a little north of north-east) is the north, that adjoining the Akál búnga the west, and so forth.

which are noticed below, and there are four *ponas* or bathing enclosures, one near the middle of each of the four sides, which are specially reserved for women. The southern part of the eastern side of the tank (where the water has its exit towards the Kaulsar) is reserved for the lower caste Sikhs known as *Mazhabís*.*

THE BUNGAS.

Adjacent to the pavement which surrounds the tank, and opening on to it, lies a succession of **bungas†** or hospices built by the Sikh Sirdárs and others as places of residence for pilgrims or for themselves and their friends when on a visit to Amritsar. There are said to be 84 *búngas* all round the tank, of which the most noteworthy are the following (for their respective positions the plan should be consulted):—

1. The **bunga** of the **Sinhdanwalia** family of Rájá Sánsí, a village six miles north of Amritsar, which was the original home of Mahárájá Ranjit Singh's ancestors.

2. The **bunga** of **Maharaja Sher Singh**, erected by the Kanhya Misl.

3. The **bunga** of **Sirdar Baghel Singh**, occupied by the Sirdárs of **Mananwala**, a village near Amritsar.

4. The **Shahid bunga**, in front of which there is a standard. This *búnga* commemorates the death of

*The *Mazhabís* are for the most part descendants of low caste converts to Sikhism and are not by most Sikhs admitted to the same privileges as other Sikhs. From this class are recruited three fine regiments of the Indian army, viz., the 23rd, 32nd and 34th Pioneers.

†The name is said to represent the Persian '*bun-gáh*', or 'settling-place', but the derivation is very doubtful.

Bábá *Díp Singh*, known as '*Shahíd*' or the Martyr, a hero who is said to have fought in 1771 A.D. against the Mussalmans with such zeal that, although his head was cut off on the site of the Rámgarhia cemetery near the Chátiwind gate of the city, his body continued fighting as far as the site of the present búnga. The well in this búnga is famed for the excellence of its water.

5. The bunga of the Nirmalas, a sect of Sikh ascetics.

6. The bunga of Bhai Vasti Ram, a pious man.

7. The Rámgarhia bunga.—Erected by the Sa dars of the *Rámgarhia* Misl in the eighteenth century. This bunga is marked by two tall **towers** which command a fine view similar to that obtained from the Bábá Atal (p. 40 below), and which were built originally with the object of observing the approach of an enemy.

The southern tower is the better one to ascend, as it is open at the top on all sides, whereas the other is not. On the walls of the southern tower are marks of bullets. Shortly after annexation a fanatical Nihang (see p. 33) shut himself up in the tower, and these bullets were aimed at him: he ultimately surrendered after a seige of eight days. On the floor of the top storey of the northern tower is a white marble slab which constitutes a trigonometrical station of the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India. It was fixed in 1860 and was used in 1885 to determine the longitude of Amritsar. In 1894 it was adopted as a latitude station.

On the side of the building facing the tank is a portico of well carved sandstone pillars. Visitors will notice with interest a large stone (6' 3" x 4' 6" x 9") which is known as the coronation stone of the Moghal Emperors, and which is said to have been brought by the Rámgarhiás from Delhi. Below this portico, and to a large extent below the level of the ground, is a spacious hall in which the Sikhs in old days held mysterious councils, and below this again are under-ground vaults, now largely filled with water, in which large bodies of armed Sikhs used to be concealed. The

horizontal brick roof in the hall is noteworthy, and also the curious approach to the well on the east side. For further particulars regarding this *búnga*, reference is invited to the author's '*Annals of the Rámgarhia Sardárs*'.

Visitors can enter this *búnga* from the outside through the bazar, and in this way can visit the *búnga* and ascend the towers without removing their boots.

8. The **Brahmbuta Akhara** or Monastery.— This was founded in 1785 by one *Santokh Dás*, and is called after one of his successors *Brahmbúta*. It is one of the chief resorts of the *Udási* sect of fakírs who are followers of *Srí Chand*, the son of *Guru Nának*, and the present *mahant* or superior is *Báwá Narinjan Dás*. Within will be seen the couch, covered with leopard and tiger skins, on which the mahant alone may sit. On the walls there are pictures of his various predecessors, and their cenotaphs or *samádhs* are in the courtyard behind. On the pavement in front of the building is a *bohar* tree (*Ficus Indica*), which when a sapling was taken by one of the previous mahants to a large number of sacred places of pilgrimage, and which hence now enjoys a special sanctity. In a small room behind this tree is a carved wooden cabinet, in which the *Granth Sáhib* is so placed that the reader may remain standing while he reads, and thus display greater respect than by reading in a sitting posture. The monastery has since Sikh times enjoyed the support of considerable *jágírs*, and a large sum is spent annually on the free distribution of food to the poor. The *public kitchen* adjoins the building and is worth a visit.

9. The **Malwai bunga**, belonging to the *Phulkián* States of *Patiála*, *Nábha* and *Jind*. Food is distributed gratis at this *búnga* also, and the rulers of these States stop here when they visit *Amritsar*.

10. The **Ahluwalia bunga**, erected by Sardár Fattéh Singh Ahlúwália (d. 1837) and owned by the Rajás of Kapúrthala. A learned man, entertained by the Kapúrthala State, here expounds the holy Granth every morning, and the Rájás, when they visit Amritsar, stop at this búnga. On a platform on the pavement opposite the búnga one may often see a number of little boys learning the Gurmukhi alphabet: this is a school maintained in the old style by one *Bhai Rai Singh*, who receives a grant-in-aid from Government.

THE PAVEMENT.

The pavement surrounding the tank is known as the Prakarama (properly Parikrama): it is 30 feet broad, of well laid white marble diversified by ribs of black and brown. The marble in the north-west corner was laid down by Mahárája Ranjit Singh and the temple authorities in 1833, that between the Clock Tower and the old gate of the Guru's garden by Rája Randhir Singh of Kapúrthala (who died in 1870), and the rest round to the Darshani gate of the shrine by Rája Ranbir Singh of Jínd (who died in 1886).

Visitors will observe with some interest the various classes of persons occupying the pavement, especially in the morning hours. Here and there may be seen *pandits* and other learned men making expositions (*kathás*) out of sacred books for the edification of large gatherings of hearers of both sexes. *Ascetics* of all kinds seat themselves to beg or to meditate. *Pedlars* are also present in large numbers, who sell cheap pictures of the Gurus, or flowers for worship, or the combs, quoits, miniature swords and daggers, steel bracelets and

chains characteristic of the Sikhs, or pamphlets containing extracts from the Granth and other religious books. The most curious of the books are the diminutive volumes known as *guthkás*, which usually contain the words of the Japjí or morning prayer (see footnote to p. 25 below). At some of the stalls can also be bought photographs and English Guides to the Temple.*

As the visitor descends the steps into the precincts he is confronted by a venerable *ber* (jujube) tree, under which is said to have worshipped the centenarian Sikh saint *Bábi Buddhá* (see p. 4), who is believed to have lived from the days of the peaceful Guru Nának (1469—1538) to those of the martial Guru Hargobind (1606—1645). A peculiar kind of money-box is fitted to the trunk of the tree. The visitor will here turn to the right, and after turning again to the left he will observe on the margin of the tank a square device in black and white marble, known as the Akhwák Chakkar, from its author, Rája Akhwák. The design is a kind of maze, and is supposed to represent the disposition of the troops of the Kauravas, through whom the Pándava prince Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna, fought his way in the celebrated battle of Kurukshetra, described in the Mahábhárata.

From this point the visitor will interrupt his circuit of the tank to see the shrine itself and the Akál búnga: but it is convenient to note here two further objects of interest which are situated on the further side of the water.

On the east side of the tank opposite the central shrine is the *Athsath Tírat*h (or 68 places of pilgrimage), a bathing-place, regarding which it is said that the spiritual merit of bathing in this place is equivalent to

* A useful History of the Hari Mandar was published in 1894 by Gurmukh Singht, Chandhar, Professor, Oriental College, Lahore; and another in 1902 by Bhai Sundar Singh of the Akál búnga, Amritsar.

that of bathing in all the 68 Hindu places of pilgrimage put together.

Further to the north is a little platform (tharra), which marks the spot where the Guru Arjan (1581—1606) is said to have sat while supervising the building of the temple.

Adjoining this platform to the north is a small shrine in two blocks. Between them is a narrow passage to a bathing place known as the '*Dukh bhanjní*' or 'Destroyer of sorrow', which marks the site of an occurrence described in the following legend :—

'There lived a wealthy and influential but unbelieving man in Patti (a village of the Lahore district) who had a beautiful daughter. This daughter being a pious woman incurred her father's displeasure and he forced her to marry a leper, telling her in scorn to support herself and her husband by the bounty of her God. The unfortunate woman accepted her lot and began to gain a livelihood by begging for alms, carrying her husband at the same time in a basket on her head. Once she happened to come to the site now occupied by the Golden Temple, and having placed the basket with her husband under a tree, she went to a neighbouring village to beg for food. Near the tree was a hollow filled with water and overgrown with reeds and plants. The man in the basket was astonished to observe a lame crow, which entered the water, emerge not only cured of its lameness, but also as white as snow. He thereupon let himself into the water, and lo! he found himself, to his unbounded delight, similarly cured and transformed. His wife returning with alms was thunderstruck to find a handsome, healthy man sitting by the basket, and could not at first believe that he was her husband, but was subsequently satisfied when the Guru himself attested the fact. Some say that one finger which had not been immersed in the water remained leprous, and that, in order to convince the woman, the Guru bade the man plunge this also into the water, whereupon the finger also at once was cured.'

On the outer walls of the shrine can be seen two small pictures illustrative of the above legend.

THE GREAT GATEWAY.

The centre of the west side of the tank is occupied by the Great Gateway, known as the **Darshani Deori** or **Darshani Darwāza**, *i.e.* the Gate of Adoration. To the north of the doorway is a small room in which the temple records are kept, and the corresponding space to the south is occupied by a store-room. In front of the latter are two large drums (*dhaansa*). The larger drum was presented a few years ago by a crippled monk from *Nábha*. The smaller one is beaten four times a day, *viz.*, at the arrival and departure of the *Granth*, at the time of the morning hymn (*ásá kí wár*) and after the evening service (*chanki*). Inside the store-room is kept the palanquin (*khásá*) presented by *Mahárāja Ranjit Singh* (1801—1839), upon which the *Granth* is carried to and from the temple.

On the left side of the gateway is engraved in gilt letters in English characters the following description of a miraculous escape from destruction by lightning, experienced by the temple in 1877:

'It should be generally known that a wonderful event took place lately in the Golden Temple. This building was erected by the Great *Guru Rámdás*, King of kings and incarnation of *Rám*, who gives blessings and receives worship from all creatures. The following is an account of what occurred on the 30th of April, 1877, at 4.30 a.m. :—About four hundred persons, according to ancient custom, were praying in this *Sri Darbar Sáhí* and listening to psalms whose music was almost drowned by the roar of thunder. Suddenly a flash of lightning fell from heaven, entered the holy place by the northern door close to the singers and musicians. A ball of fire, about two seers in weight, burst in the temple shining with dazzling and terrible brightness. Then immediately after shining before the Holy Book it returned to the sky through the southern entrance, and although it fell with such awful violence and so loud a report, yet there was no injury caused to the *Darbár Sahib* or to human life. Therefore all who were assembled joined in ascribing this miracle to *Rámdás*, who dedicated this temple to *Hari*. We think it is also a sign of the great prosperity of the British rule. Also we are thankful to the Empress of India. We pray to the Creator of all things for a daily increase in their happy influence and for the destruction of all the enemies of Her Imperial Majesty. The Government Inspector waited on the Commissioner and informed him of this

remarkable event. The following gentlemen—viz., the Commissioner, Rāja Surat Singh, Sardār General Gulab Singh, Bhagowālia, Sardār Mangal Singh, Rāngarhia—and all the worshippers agreed that money being collected by friends of the Golden Temple half should be given towards the support of the sacred edifice and half to pay for a dinner to the poor. Sufficient money was gathered to pay for seven readings of the Granth Sāhib and to feed some thousands of poor people, who all expressed their gratitude. This notice is also intended as a memorial of the superintendence of Sardār Mangal Singh over the Srī Darbar Sāhib of Hari and as a remembrance of the miracle of Guru Rāmdās and the prosperity of our rulers, which we pray may last to the end of time.—B. K.’

On the top of the large marble door-frame are reproduced in inlay the four lines, beginning ‘We have seen all places, but none like thee’, which have already been quoted on page 6 above; and beneath these verses is added a note to the effect that the marble covering was added under the superintendence of Rai Bahádur Kalián Singh in Sambat 1944 (A.D. 1887).

The large **gates** leading to the temple are covered on the outside with silver plates, but visitors should not fail to look also at the inner side, which is decorated with some old and finely executed ivory inlay. There is a replica of the outside, but unfortunately not of the inside, of this gate in the South Kensington Museum. The date of the work is not known. There is a tradition that the gates were made from public subscriptions through one Bhai Des Raj in A.D. 1759, and that the inlay in ivory was done by an artist from Chiniot: but the appearance of the work would seem to indicate an earlier date.

Inside the portal on the south side will be seen a marble tablet set up by the 35th Sikh Regiment on their return from the Chitral Expedition of 1895. The decorations on the walls and the roof of the portal should also be observed.

On the north side is a small door leading up to the Temple **Treasury**, which is located in rooms over the

main gateway. Entrance to the treasury can only be obtained by special permission of the Manager of the Temple, and as the granting of permission entails the presence of several officials of the temple and gives a good deal of trouble, it will not be worth the while of any but real connoisseurs to make the necessary application.

Among the objects of interest which are usually shown are :

An arched canopy-stand, used to place over the Granth Sáhíb on state occasions. The branch-work is of gold; and on it are fixed four peacocks of gold studded with jewels, and two quoits of gold presented by the 45th Sikhs. On the branching are hung several tassels of gold and of pearls, and also the marriage brow-ornament (*sehra*) of Prince Nau Nihál Singh (grandson of Mahárája Ranjit Singh), who was married at the Golden Temple: this last ornament, which was presented by Ranjit Singh, is made mainly of green enamel studded with diamonds, with pearl and emerald pendants. At the top of the gold branching is fixed a small circular canopy of gold and jewels, hung with 108 pearls from the necklace of Mahárája Sher Singh: this also was presented by Mahárája Ranjit Singh. Above this again is affixed a small peacock, with a breast of blue enamel and wings made each of one emerald: this peacock has in its mouth a small chain of pearls, and in its ears two pearls, one of which is said to be genuine and the other not.

Two bedsteads for the Granth Sáhíb: one of which was given by the Mahárája of Patiala, and has legs studded with gems.

A staff of gold, and two hand-pankhas with gold shafts.

A lampstand of pure gold.

A silver quoit, presented by a soldier of the 5th Punjab Infantry.

Two lampstands of silver, and a 'chauki', also of silver.

Two door-leaves covered with excellent ornamentation in gold relief: the panels containing portraits of the ten Gurus.

These ornaments are most of them brought into use on occasions of more than ordinary ceremony: but, as a rule, are kept very jealously under lock and key. They are for the most part good specimens of the rough setting common in India, and the modern embossed work is exceedingly good of its kind.

THE CAUSEWAY.

The **causeway** or *pul* leading from the Great Gateway to the shrine itself is one of the most remarkable features of the temple. It is 227 feet long and 17 feet 11 inches broad, and is supported on arches which are sometimes visible when the water in the tank is low. The balustrades of marble lattice work on either side are said to have originally formed part of the tomb of Jahángír at Sháhdara near Lahore, and to have been removed to this spot by Mahárāja Ranjit Singh. In the centre of the causeway will be seen a succession of brass sockets, into which a row of posts is inserted on the occurrence of the more crowded festivals, so as to provide a railing for the division of advancing worshippers from those retiring. This arrangement has been in force since 1896, when the marble balustrade on the north side gave way owing to the crush of people, and some ten or twelve persons fell into the water.

In the middle of the causeway on the north side is a *sun-dial*, which was designed and set up by Sardár Lahna Singh of Majítha (d. 1854), a prominent chief of the Court of Ranjit Singh, who attained considerable proficiency in scientific studies, and was well known to all European officers of the day who had dealings with the Sikhs. The dial marks both English and native time, and the Gurmukhi inscription on it runs as follows:

‘This sun-dial was devised and made by Sardár Lahna Singh of Majítha in 1909 (A.D. 1852). In Asu 1951 (A.D. 1894) the pillar and the sun-dial were renewed in marble under the superintendence of Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh Gyáni.’

THE CENTRAL SHRINE.

The central shrine is known as the **Harmandar** (or Hari-Mandar), i.e. the Temple of God. It stands on a platform in the lake, 65½ feet square, and is itself a

Platform = 65 ft Square
24 Shrine 40 ft Square

square of $40\frac{1}{2}$ feet, with four doors, one on each side, and consists of a single room surrounded by a covered gallery. The exterior walls are adorned below with marble inlay, (which is said to have cost Rs. 200 per square foot,) and above with reliefs in copper gilt. The domes are also carved with heavily gilt plates of copper. It was Mahārāja Ranjit Singh who first, in 1803, roofed the Harmandir with these sheets of gilt copper which now cause it to be known among Europeans as the 'Golden Temple.'

The **decorative work*** of the temple is thus described by Mr. *J. L. Kipling*, late Principal of the Mayo School of Art, Lahore :

'Not only is the upper storey of the Darbar Sāhib sheathed in plates of richly embossed and heavily gilded beaten work in copper, but the lower storey is encased in a panelling or wainscot of slabs of marble inlaid with cornelian, mother-of-pearl, serpentine, lapis-lazuli, and other stones resembling in technique the work on the Agra Mumtaz Mahal, but marked by some notable differences of artistic treatment. The Sikhs are really as fond of decoration as other Hindus, and they continue to spend large sums of money on beautifying their temple. Wealthy members of other castes are permitted (and find it good policy) to present contributions in the form of inlaid marble slabs or copper plates, with which parts of the interior, formerly painted in fresco merely, are now being covered.

Attached to the foundation is a workshop, where marble masonry is constantly being wrought for the repair of the shrine. The workmen are Sikhs, and they have the peculiarly leisurely way of addressing themselves to labour which everywhere distinguishes those who take the daily wage of a wealthy corporation. The great difference between their work and the similar *pietra dura* of Agra lies in the introduction of living forms, as fishes, birds and animals ; sometimes the figure of a devotee, to whose beard is cleverly given a naturalistic air by its being formed of a piece of veined agate, is introduced. The designs, too, though over suave and flowing in line like all modern Indian work, are less Italian in character than those of Agra, and are marked by that local character of all Sikh ornament, which is much easier to recognize than to describe.

* Of the architecture of the Golden Temple Mr. Fergusson has little to say. 'It is useful', he remarks, 'as exemplifying one of the forms which Indian temple-architecture assumed in the 19th century, and where (sic) for the present we must leave it' (*Indian Architecture*, p. 469).

The embossed copper-work is wrought independently of the temple by chhateras or chasers, who, like others of their craft, also work in silver on occasion. The doors of the central building in which the *Ádi Granth* is kept during the day are sheathed in silver, and are good specimens of this interesting and beautiful art.

The Sikhs have a tradition that at the consultations held before beginning the Golden Temple, it was proposed to make the building gorgeous with pearls, jewels and gold, but that for fear of robbery plates of gilded metal and slabs of inlaid marble were eventually adopted. The metal plates were evidently suggested by the temples of Benares, to one of which, that of Bisheshwar, Mahárāja Ranjit Singh contributed gilded coverings for the domes. The temple at Patna, the birthplace of Guru Gobind Singh, it may be noted, was in great part built by his liberality, and it is kept in repair by Punjab Sikhs to this day.

The beaten metal-work is relatively cheap, a large copper panel, about 2 feet 6 inches square, covered with foliage in relief of excellent execution, costing Rs. 24.'

There are *inscriptions* on the outside on the copper gilt above the various doors of the shrine.

Over the main entrance door is an inscription recording the benefactions of Mahárāja Ranjit Singh in A.D. 1830, and also the first phrase of the portion of Scripture known as the *Japjī*.* Below is a further inscription stating that the small, white marble pavement round the temple was constructed by Sardār Lahna Singh, Majitha, through Bhai Gurmukh Singh, Gyáni. Above these inscriptions is a representation of Bábá Nának, with his attendant Bhai Bála on the right, and his minstrel Mardána on the left; and above this again is the figure of Guru Gobind Singh on horse back.

Over the northern door are recorded the benefactions (in A.D. 1839) of Mahárāja Kharak Singh the son, and Kanwar Nau Nihál Singh, the grandson, of Ranjit Singh.

Over the southern door is the first portion of the formula of offering (*ardás*) known as the '*bhagautí*.'

Hindus and Sikhs (other than Mazhabís) may enter the shrine by the door facing the causeway; persons of other religions usually proceed to the left and enter by

* The words are: 'God is one, His name is true, He is the Creator, without fear, without enmity, Timeless Being, has never come in a womb, is self-existing, great and merciful. Repeat: 'At the beginning of the age was the True One; Now is also the True One, O Nának; In future also will exist the True One.'

the door on the north side. On entering, the visitor will find on his left front a copy of the Holy **Granth** or Sacred Scripture of the Sikhs wrapped in folds of cloth and resting on the Manji Sáhib (a silk-woven stand with four silver legs). Above it is stretched a fine awning of silk, and behind it sits the reciter or *Granthi*, who waves over it a yak's tail (chaur) with a gold handle.

As the Granth is the central object of veneration in this temple, it may be noted here that there are three copies of the Sacred Volume maintained for the religious services of the shrine, and that they are all kept at night at the Akál búnga.

One very large copy is used only on the festival of the Biás Púja or for a complete lection (Akhand Páth), in which the whole book is read without interruption from beginning to end. The two others—one bound in gold and one in silver—are taken out for alternate use in the daily worship of the Harmandar. These books are old copies, but are not the original: the original work, after accompanying Guru Har-gobind on his wanderings, is said to have been finally removed to Kartárpur by Vahír Mal, a brother of Guru Har Rai (1645—1661). The Granth read in the Harmandar is the Ádi-Granth which was put together by Guru Arjan (1581—1606). In the Akál búnga there are also two copies of the '*Daswin Padsháh ká Granth*' which was composed by Guru Gobind Singh (1675—1708), but this is not read in the Harmandar.

This place of worship is distinguished from those of the Hindus, inasmuch as it contains no image; and from those of the Mahomedans, inasmuch as it is approached from all four sides and does not entail a fixed direction for worship. The *Granth Sáhib* is looked upon as the spiritual representative of the Sikh Gurus or Teachers, and the same respect is shown towards it as would be shown to a living Gurn. Just as the Gurus used to sit and receive their disciples in semi-regal state, after the fashion of the 'Darbárs' of native Princes, so the Granth Sáhib now comes each day to receive the respects and offerings of its followers, and the place where this is done is known as the '**Darbar Sahib**'. The shrine

which is known to Europeans as the 'Golden Temple' is universally known among natives as the 'Darbār Sāhib.'*

The daily routine of the *temple services* is somewhat as follows :

3 A.M.

At 3 a.m. the temple is opened and the musicians (*rāgis*) sing the hymn known as the 'Āsā kī wār' and other hymns (*shabds*) from the Granth. The completion of the singing (*bhog*) takes place at daylight, shortly after the Granth Sāhib itself has been installed. The Book is brought on a litter with great ceremony, and beating of drums, and singing of hymns, and blowing of conches (*sankh*) and brass 'serpents' (*narsingha*); and is spoken of from this circumstance as *Aswāra Sāhib* (the Holy Rider). It is then opened at random in the presence of a considerable number of people, and the Granthi reads the first stanzas that present themselves. It is then closed, and is afterwards only opened at the special request of any worshipper. The musicians and the Granthis respectively succeed each other at stated intervals, and at all times of the day there is singing going on: the hymns sung are those in the two Granths, those composed by Bhai Gurdās, uncle of the 5th Guru, and those composed by Bhai Nand Lal, the poet of the court of Guru Gobind Singh. Special prayers of offering (*ardās*, i.e. the Persian *arz-dāsht*) are made four times a day. At evening the Evening prayer (*rahrās*) is begun by the musicians (*rabābīs*) and finished by the Granthi. This is succeeded by the ceremony of *artī*, during which lighted lamps are waved before the Sacred Book, and this again is followed by a procession and singing of hymns round the shrine, known as *chauki*. Later on the Granthi again opens the book and reads a stanza; after which the prayer of rest (*sobila*) is sung, and the Book is taken back to the *Akāl būnga* with great solemnity. The musicians then leave, and for four or five hours (about 11 p.m. to 3 a.m.) the temple is left unoccupied in order that it may be swept and cleaned. No preaching or exposition is carried on in the temple itself, but exposition (*katha*) by men learned in the Scriptures (*Gyānis*) goes on from time to time on the pavement round the tank.

A large number of sacred days (*Gurpurbs*) commemorating the birth, installation and death of the ten Gurus and the births and deaths of the

* There is an interesting ceremony known as the *Kard Bhate* or 'offering of the dagger.' When a Sikh brings the offering of flour, sugar and ghi, known as *Karāh parshad*, it is touched with a dagger (*kard*) and a portion of it is conveyed to a bowl (*chhanna*), which is kept under the *manji sāhib* or couch on which Granth Sāhib rests. It is believed that the offering reaches the Guru by this process and is, moreover, thereby purified.

four sons of Guru Gobind Singh are observed at the temple. The chief anniversaries thus observed are four in number, viz., the birth of Guru Nának (generally in November), the birth of Guru Rámdás, (shortly before the above), the death of Guru Rámdás (usually in September) and the birth of Guru Gobind Singh (at the end of December or beginning of January). The dates of these festivals are calculated by the lunar months, and have consequently no fixed corresponding dates in the English calendar.

When a child is to receive its name, it is brought to the Granthi, who opens the Granth at random : the first letter of the page thus opened is adopted as the first letter of the child's name.

On the left-hand side of the Granthí sit *pujaris*, and on his right hand the *musicians*. The former are hereditary incumbents of the temple, who obtain an income from a portion of the offerings. The latter are hereditary ministrants, grouped in 15 parties, who relieve each other at stated intervals. They are of two classes—eight parties (known as *rágis*) being Sikhs, and seven (known as *rabábis*) being Mahomedans. The former are on duty till noon, and the latter after noon.

The chief instruments employed are :

The *rabáb* or rebeck, having four strings of gut, employed only to strike the keynote.

The *dutára* and *chutára*, with two and four strings respectively : a kind of guitar, somewhat smaller than the *rabáb*.

The above are used by the *rabábis* only and are played with a plectrum or *jáwa*.

The *saranda*, used by *rágis* only : an instrument with strings of iron or brass wire (sometimes of silk gut) and played with a bow.

The *táús* or peacock, similar to the above but larger, and with the figure of a peacock carved at the lower end.

The *sitar*, a kind of guitar with iron or brass wire strings, varying in number from six to forty : it is played with the aid of a peculiar shaped finger-ring known as the 'mizráb' or striker.

The *tambúra* or mandoline with four strings, one of iron and three of brass wire : it is played with the right hand and emits a continuous note.

The *tablas* or small drums for beating time, usually placed in pairs, the hands being employed to beat the vellum.

A diminutive *harmonium* : the only wind instrument employed.*

* Readers interested in Oriental music may profitably consult Sourindro Mohun Tagore's 'Hindu Musical Instruments' and 'Hindu Music,' and Day's 'Music and Musical Instruments.'

In the open space before the Granthi a cloth is spread, upon which lie three silver vessels. One of these is a covered bowl in which are kept mushroom-shaped pieces of sugar (*kujja*) for presentation to strangers and others. Another is an open bowl in which offerings of *ghi* (clarified butter) are accommodated. The third is a closed vessel known as a *golak*, through a slit in the top of which all money offerings in silver coin are deposited. The smaller offerings in copper or cowries are thrown on to the cloth. A worshipper who wishes to give an offering to the *granthi* or to the musicians or *pujaris* present, or to any particular fund connected with the temple (such as the building, decoration or free kitchen funds), can do so by specifying his wishes as he makes his offering: but any offering deposited in the vessel or on the cloth in front without explanation is understood to be for the general expenses of the temple.* European visitors may make a contribution here, or may bestow it, after completing their round, through the medium of the temple official at the police post near the clock tower.

Over the door by which the visitor enters is a fine *clock* of chiselled brass-work, presented in 1902 by His Excellency the Viceroy, *Lord Curzon*, in commemoration of his official visit to Amritsar in 1900. The inscription on the clock runs as follows :

‘Let Curzon holde what Curzon helde.’

‘This clock was presented to the Golden Temple at Amritsar by Lord Curzon, Viceroy and Governor-General of India, on the occasion of his first official visit, April 1900.’

The time had previously been indicated by a time-piece of the kitchen-clock type which used to hang on the northern wall.

* The financial arrangements of the temple are rather complicated, but it is unnecessary to trouble European sightseers (for whom this book is primarily intended) with the details.

After viewing the interior from below the visitor may, if he feels disposed, return through the north door and proceed by a staircase in the south-east corner to the rooms and *gallery* above, where he will observe more closely the elaborate mirror decoration of the walls and roof. There are also some curious frescoes on the walls, regarding which Mr. J. L. Kipling writes:

"Fresco painting also forms part of the decoration of the interior of the temple, and it seems to be resorted to more frequently than is necessary. The work of to-day is inferior as decoration to that originally wrought. Flowers, especially roses, are treated in a naturalistic manner, and crowded masses of detail in painfully brilliant colours replace the simpler and more ornamental forms of early work."

In the balcony room on the east side of the gallery the decoration is especially noteworthy. It is in this room that the complete lection (*Akhand Páth*) of the Granth is carried out. A devout worshipper who presents 50 rupees can obtain through the Manager the services of readers who, in the space of 48 hours, during which they relieve each other, read the whole of the Sacred Volume without cessation from beginning to end.

A staircase leads up from the gallery to the *roof* of the shrine. The tessellated floor on the roof is worthy of notice, as well as the interior decoration of the room which occupies the centre of the roof-space. From a pavilion in the south-west corner a good view of the tank can be obtained.

On descending again to the ground floor the visitor will find on his right—on the east side of the shrine—a small flight of marble steps leading down to the tank. These steps are known as the '**Har ki pauni**' or 'Steps of God', and it is customary for worshippers to halt here and sip a little water from the hollow of the hand. At this spot all caste distinctions are said to be obliterated.

It was at the Har ki pauri that, according to Sikh legend, the building of the temple was one evening advanced by supernatural agency, and a reference to this miracle is made in the Granth in the words, 'He (God) himself stood up for the work of saints (devotees) and came in person to have the work done.'*

It was at the Har ki pauri also that the claims of *Banda Bairagi*, the Sikh leader who endeavoured to assert his claims as a Guru after Guru Gobind Singh had definitely closed the line of Gurus, were supernaturally disallowed. Two slips of paper were thrown here into the water, on one of which it was written that the claims should be recognized, and on the other that they should be rejected: the former sank, and the latter swam.

The pious Sikh worshipper on leaving the shrine will proceed to walk round it, keeping on its right and halting as he passes the Har ki pauri. This act of circumambulation, known as *Pradakshina*, is common in all Hindu temples. The sightseer cannot do better than follow his example and return to the causeway by the passage on the south side of the shrine.

THE AKAL BUNGA.

On returning through the Great Gateway the visitor finds before him a broad courtyard. On the north side are two standards (jhandas), and behind them a hospice known as the **Jhanda bunga**. A standard was first erected in this place by two Udasis of the Brahmblhuta Akhara in A.D. 1775, but it was blown down by a storm in 1841 and was re-erected at Tarn Taran by Maharaja Sher Singh.† In the same year one of the

* In the chapter entitled 'Phunhey' near the end of the Granth: not contained in Dr. Trumpp's translation.

† The fall of the standard was looked on by some as ominous of the fall of the Empire of Ranjit Singh's family. The fallen standard is said by some to have been deposited in the tank alongside the causeway.

present standards in this place was set up by Mahārāja Sher Singh, and the other by Sardār Desa Singh, Majithia. They are of iron, gilt above; and on the flags are outlines of a shield and dagger.*

Further on the north side is the **Gharial bunga**, or gong house, where the gong is sounded after every *ghari* or space of 24 minutes in order to guide the ministrants of the temple in their functions. The time is measured by a vessel with a hole in the bottom, which is floated in a reservoir of water, and which is constructed so as to sink in 24 minutes.

On the south-west is a tall mast (still incomplete) encased in silver and resting on a marble pedestal: this was presented by the Rāja of Nábha in July 1902, on the occasion of his son's marriage.

To the north of this mast on the pavement of the courtyard is a fine piece of inlaid design, which is said to have cost some 100 rupees per square foot to work.

Facing the visitor on the west of the courtyard is a gilt-domed building called the **Akal bunga** or 'Hospice of the Everlasting'. It is often spoken of as the *Takht Akál búnga*, being one of the four seats of Sikhism known as *Takhts* or thrones; the others are at Anandpur in the Hoshiárpur district, at Patna in Behár, and at Abchnagar (Nader) in the Dekhan. The *Takht Akál búnga* was founded by the 6th Guru, **Hargobind**, on the 10th Hár, Sambat 1663 (A.D. 1607). This Guru was the first to infuse a martial spirit into the Sikhs, and it is stated that when he was being installed at the *Akal búnga* and his predecessor's insignia were brought before him, he said, 'The spiritual part of our mission is

* Every Sikh temple has a flag with this device.

sufficiently advanced : bring now two swords, one indicating *pírí* (Guruship) and the other *mírí* (Chiefship), for I have now to commence with the temporal part of Sikhism.' Like the Harmandar the Akál búnga was destroyed by Ahmad Sháh Abdálí, but was very speedily restored by the Sikhs, and at the beginning of the eighteenth century the edifice was adorned by the liberality of Mahárája Ranjit Singh and the Sikh Sardárs, more especially the celebrated general, Hari Singh Nálwa.

In the courtyard may generally be seen a certain number of the Sikh devotees known as **Nihangs** or **Akalis**, who dress usually in blue and wear high conical turbans adorned with quoits, as well as large assortments of cutlery all over their persons. The following description of this class of devotees may be of interest :*

The Akális are so called as being in a special sense the followers of the 'Immortal Being' (Akál Purkh). They date their origin from the time of Guru Gobind Singh, but first came to prominence in the time of Mahárája Ranjit Singh. They represented at once the most unruly and the bravest portion of the Mahárája's very unruly and very brave army. Their head-quarters were at Amritsar, and they constituted themselves the guardians of the faith and assumed the right to convoke Synods. When Metcalfe's mission was in Amritsar in 1809 the Envoy's bodyguard had a serious affray with the Akális. These sectaries also levied offerings by force even from their Sikh brethren and were the terror of the Sikh chiefs. Their good qualities were, however, well appreciated by the Mahárája, and when there were specially fierce foes to meet—such as the Patháns beyond the Indus—the Akális were always to the front. After annexation they for a time manifested their old spirit, and as lately as 1864 a Christian missionary was killed by them at a fair at Anandpur in the Hoshiárpur district. Now, however, they are changing with the times and are diminishing in numbers.

Many of the Akális are known as Nihangs, and the word is often applied to the whole order. The word means a 'shark,' that animal being a symbol of eternity, and is said to have been applied to them by Guru Gobind Singh himself on seeing their peculiar peaked head-dress. The tall blue conical turban is said to have been mounted so as to give a ferocious aspect to the wearer, and also to serve as a stand-

* For some excellent pictures of Akális attention is invited to the Hon'ble W. G. Osbourne's 'Court and Camp of Ranjit Singh.'

and while leaving both hands free. With his head-gear plentifully adorned with steel quoits, miniature swords, daggers and chains, and with his 'thorax and abdomen festooned with curious cutlery', the Akáli walks proudly about as if he were monarch of all he surveyed.

They are very strict Sikhs and retain very carefully the five *kakkas*. They generally partake plentifully of *bhang* (hemp). They are often celibate, and their marriages when performed are carried out without the aid of Brahmans. The Akáli, if he has a license, wears a sword: otherwise he will often satisfy his fancy with a wooden sword. He also keeps with much care a staff adorned with iron bands, which is called a 'salotar.' One branch of them will never use a word of the feminine gender, and others will add the word *Singh* or lion—the distinctive affix of Sikh names) after almost every substantive they use. The Akáli is full of memories of the glorious days of the Khálsa: he is nothing if not a soldier—a soldier of the Guru. He dreams of armies, and he thinks in lakhs. Often if an Akáli wishes to imply that five of his order are present, he will say 'Five lakhs are before you'; or if he would explain that he is alone, he will say that he is with 'one and a quarter lakhs of the Khálsa.' You ask him how he is, and he replies that 'the army is well'; you enquire where he has come from, and he says, 'The troops marched from Lahore.' At the end of his prayers he shouts, 'Sat Srí Akál' ('God the Immortal is True') as loud as he can, and if he is given money to buy 'karáb parshád and requested to do so', he utters this Jaikára or cry of victory, as it is called.

The Akál búnga is a very favourite place among the Sikhs for the administration of the **pahul** or religious baptism of their creed. The *pahul* can be taken anywhere in the presence of the Granth and at the hands of any man of reputed sanctity or learning; it is taken by preference at one of the 'Takhts' (see p. 32) if one is within reach. Both males and females receive it, but the latter naturally with less publicity than the former, and in either case it is usually taken after reaching the age of understanding, that is say, as a rule not before the age of ten years. The ceremony at Akál búnga is as follows:

On the projecting balcony (built in 1878) sits one of the priests with the open Granth before him, and below in the courtyard stands the man who is to be baptised, while the five initiated Sikhs, whose presence is indispensable for the ceremony, stand by the priest.* The

* The five initiated Sikhs remain on the 'Takht.' If the novice be of respectable status, he also is allowed to go up and stand near the balcony, but not upon it.

sacred water of the tank is taken in an iron bowl, some sugar is added and the whole is mixed with an iron two-edged dagger (*khandā*). When a woman is to be baptized a one-edged miniature iron sword, called *Kard*, is used. The mixture thus prepared is known as *amrit* (nectar), and while the five Sikhs continue to repeat hymns, the 'amrit' is stirred by one of them with a two-edged dagger. It is afterwards sprinkled five times with the dagger on the man's face. During this operation he must keep his eyes open and repeat the Sikh words of greeting, 'Wáh Guru jí ká khálsa, wáh Guru jí kí fatteh' ('God's is the khalsa and God's the victory'). He then sips the water five times from the hollow of his hand, five times has the water poured on his head, and then drinks it from the vessel itself. He is then given a concoction of flour, sugar and ghee, which is known as the 'karáh parshád' and this he eats in common with the others who receive the 'pahul' along with him. From this time forth he becomes a spiritual son of Guru Gobind Singh, and adds the title of 'Singh' or 'Lion' after his name.

Some 1,200 persons take the pahul annually at this spot.

The Akál búnga is also a place of *penance* and *absolution*. An offender stands before the balcony on which the Holy Book of the Granth is open, and confesses his offence before all the Sikhs who may be assembled there. The priests fix a penalty (*tankhwáh*) according to the status of the offender and the nature of the offence; the poorer sinners being assigned tasks, such as the cleaning of the temple or the repeating of certain hymns. The offender must in any case be re-baptized, and an offence for which the penalty so assigned is paid is expiated in this world and the next. It is said that even Mahárāja Ranjit Singh, when he espoused the Mahomedan courtesan Moran, was made to do penance here.

At the autumn festival of the Dusehra a he-goat is slaughtered in the courtyard below the Akál búnga, and special honours are paid to the swords of the Gurus.

The Court in front of the Akál búnga was also the scene of the National Councils (*Gurumata*) which used to be held by the Sikhs in the eighteenth century. The last Gurumata was held in 1805, when the British army pursued Holkar in the Panjáb.

Visitors who are not Sikhs are not allowed on the projecting balcony, but the rest of the *interior* of the Akál búnga is worth a visit. In a shrine inside the balcony are kept with great reverence several specimens of the **arms** (shastars) of the Gurus, of which the more interesting are :

A scimitar (talwár) with which Guru Gobind Singh slew his Mahomedan adversary.

A mace belonging to Guru Hargobind.

Scimitars owned by Maharája Ranjit Singh of Lahore, Rája Hira Singh of Nábha, and Rája Surúp Singh of Jínd.

A large sword (bhaganta) belonging to Bába Díp Singh Shahíd, who fought against the Mussalmans after his head had been cut off.

A large sword belonging to Bába Gurbakhsh Singh.

A dagger of Guru Hargobind with which he killed four tigers.

An arrow of Guru Gobind Singh, which is said to have travelled three miles.

In the small room to the north are preserved behind glass two wall *pictures*, one of which portrays Guru Hargobind with his hawk, and the other represents the Sikh shrine at Abchnagar in the Dekhan, where Guru Gobind Singh died. This room constitutes the treasury of the Akál búnga. In another room to the south are kept the copies of the Granth ; and in a room at the back of the building the visitor will generally be able to see the attendants pounding *bhang* (*Cannabis indica*) an intoxicant commonly used by mendicants.

Visitors who can only afford time for a short visit, or who come during the hot time of the day, will gene-

rally return to the clock tower after seeing the Akál búnga ; but there are other parts of the precincts which are well worth a visit. If making a complete inspection, the visitor will on leaving the Akál búnga proceed round the pavement to the south-east corner, passing on his way the Sher Singh, Mánawála and Shahíd bungas (p. 14 above), and will then advance through a recently opened passage under the Nirmala búnga to the

GURU'S GARDEN

ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਬਾਗ਼

or *Guru ká bāgh*.

This garden was planted in commemoration of *Guru Arjan* (1581—1607), who is said to have frequently sat and walked here. It is a common resting-place for beggars and ascetics of all descriptions, and it is accordingly very difficult for the temple authorities to keep it in any sort of good order. It contains some specimens of the *Maulsari* tree (*Mimusops elengi*), which is very uncommon in this part of India.

On entering the garden the visitor finds in front of him a platform with a pavilion, which is known as the '*Manjī Sāhib*' or 'Holy Couch', and which marks the place where *Guru Arjan* used to sit. This pavilion, together with other stone-works in the *Guru's* garden, and the marble fountain-base before the Akál búnga, were removed from the Rámbagh after the Mutiny, and presented to the shrine by Mr. F. Cooper, Deputy Commissioner.

Turning to the right one finds on the west side of the garden a range of rooms occupied by a '*langar*'

or 'free kitchen,' which was started a few years ago by public subscription.

Facing this is a small platform erected in memory of a Sikh martyr, and beyond this on the eastern side of the garden a somewhat dilapidated building commemorative of *Mahárāja Ranjit Singh*.

At the south-east corner of the garden is the passage to the Bábá Atal (see p. 39), which the visitor will next proceed to see. On returning to the garden one should go through to the north-west side and visit the **marble factory**, or patthar-khána, where the ornamentation and repairs to the temple are carried out, of which an account has already been given on p. 24 above.

The white marble used to come from Jaipur, but it is now obtained from Makrana in the Jodhpur State. The black marble is from Bhansrana and the Alwar State, the red from Tatpur, and the yellow from the Jaisalmir State. The mottled varieties are from Jaisalmir, Karnoli, and Attock. The chief stones required for the inlayed work are jade and serpentine from Khotan and Yárkand, lapis-lazuli from Kashgar, cornelian from Gwalior and from Khamach near Bombay, mother-of-pearl and quartz from Bombay, etc.

The factory is under the management of Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh, Gyáni, Barrister-at-Law.

On leaving the marble factory one should go along the north wall of the garden to the engine-shed, where the **electric light** is generated. This form of lighting was introduced in 1898 at the cost of the Rája of Farídkot, and is now used for lighting all the exterior parts of the temple, but it is not admitted inside the Harmandar or the Akál búnga. In the Harmandar only lamps of ghi or candles are used; no oil being allowed.

BABA ATAL.

On the south-east of the Guru ká bágh is the shrine and tower of **Baba Atal**. Bábá Atal (whose name signifies 'the undying one') was the young son of Guru Hargobind (1606—1645), and the following is the legend connected with his death :—

'Bábá Atal had a playmate named Mohan, from whom he won a bet at play one evening in the month of Assu, Sambat 1685 (A.D. 1629), and promising to reclaim it in the morning he returned home. It chanced that Mohan died of snake bite that night, and Bábá Atal, on hearing this, went to his house and restored him to life by touching him with his stick. Guru Hargobind expressed great displeasure at this act, and said: "Gurus should display their power in purity of doctrine and holiness of living, but never in miracles." He further added that "two swords cannot be put in one scabbard"; on hearing which Bábá Atal said he would give up his own life in the place of his playfellow, and going out he laid himself down and died.*

His body was cremated on the spot now occupied by the tower; and just after the burning ceremony was over, a Sikh brought some cakes of bread to Guru Hargobind, whereupon the Guru exclaimed: "Bábá Atal pakki pakái ghal" ("Bábá Atal, send cooked food"). These words have passed into a common saying, which is frequently in the mouths of the poor who frequent the shrine. Another Sikh who attended the ceremony cried out that he had lost his occupation, which was that of shampooing the limbs of the saintly youth. Him the Guru consoled by saying that in future all Sikhs would perform this office; and it is the custom that every worshipper on reaching the inner platform of the shrine gently rubs it with his hand.

On the entrance door is a gilt relief representing the ten Gurus. To the right are shown Bábá Gurditta and Suraj Mal, the sons of Guru Hargobind and brothers of Bábá Atal; to the left Lachmi Chand and Srí Chand, the sons of Bábá Nának, and Ani-rai, the son of Guru Hargobind. Inside is the samádh or cenotaph of Bábá Atal, which is placed in the central chamber under a highly ornamented roof.

From the passage round the central room one can ascend the tower. This tower has seven stories of full size,

* The story is illustrated in a large fresco painting on the wall by the large door on the left.

representing the seven years of Bábá Atal's life. The foundation was laid in A.D. 1779, and the two lowest stories were built by Sardár Jodh Singh, Rámgarhia, (d. 1816). The other stories were built later by various Sardárs and by public subscription, and the gilt dome at the top was presented by Sardár Desa Singh, Majíthia, (d. 1832). The tower is octagonal in shape and ascended by 110 steps. A lamp of ghi (clarified butter) is kept burning all night in the lowest story, and a lamp of oil in the topmost story. The tower is also lighted by electricity, and the electric globe on the top is a well-known landmark in Amritsar. Bábá Atal is looked on as the *kotwál* or guardian saint of the city, and it is said no one, however degraded he may be, will swear falsely by his name.

The **view** from the top on a clear day is excellent. Facing *north* one sees on the left the spire of the civil station church peeping out from the trees. In front, and nearer, are the two cupolas of the municipal hall, and the red brick range of the municipal school. Nearer still are the two towers of the Rámgarhiás. Further to the right is the spire of Virbhán's Thákardwára (temple of Vishnu); beyond that one sees in the distance the village of Váirka, and beyond all, the snow-capped Himalayas. To the *east* one sees far away the town of Jandiála (10 miles off) with the white spire of its Jain temple, and further to the south the tower of the Sikh shrine of Tarn Táran (13 miles off). In the foreground may be seen the small white shrine of Babeksar, and to the right of that the Rámgarhia cemetery. To the *west* is the roof of Rája Teja Singh's temple, and a little to the right of the temple can be seen the Union Jack flying from a bastion in the Gobindgarh fort. Visitors interested in local topography will observe the sites of the various forts erected by the Sikhs, such as the Rámgarhia fort of Rámrauni to the south-east, the Killa

Bhangian to the south-west, and the Ahluwália fort to the north-west.

In the courtyard round the Bábá Atal shrine may be seen a number of samádhs or cenotaphs. One immediately to the south of the building is that of Mohan, the playmate of Bábá Atal. To the east of this are the cenotaphs of Nawáb Kapur Singh, Faizalpuria, (d. 1753) and of Sardar Jodh Singh, Adálatí, Extra Assistant Commissioner, a previous Manager of the Temple. A large building to the south contains the samádh of Sardar Jassa Singh, Ahluwália, (d. 1783). Further to the west is that of Bhai Ganda Singh, in the wall of which may be seen a picture of Bábá Atal. Further to the north, on the west of the shrine, is a large building commemorative of Bhai Sant Singh, Gyáni, (great-grandfather of Bhai Gurbaksh Singh, the present Manager of the Marble Factory), the interior of which is decorated with reliefs of various Hindu gods. Beyond the buildings to the south of Bábá Atal, is an old burning-ground and many other cenotaphs.

On the west of the shrine lies a small tank known as the **Kaulsar**.

The Kaulsar or Lotus tank is named after one Kaulan, the daughter of a Kázi of Lahore, who became a convert to Sikhism and took refuge with Guru Hargobind (1606—1645) at Amritsar. The cenotaph is at the western end of the tank. The average length of the tank at its bed is 389 feet and the average breadth 153 feet, at the top 408 feet and 178 feet, and the maximum depth 11 feet 3 inches. The average depth of supply maintained is 10 feet. The water enters at the north-west and goes out at south-east end of the tank. An enormous number of *bats* frequent this tank at evening, and may generally be seen hanging in the trees during the day.

On leaving the Bábá Atal and Kaulsar the visitor will retrace his steps to the Guru's garden and visit the marble factory and engine-house (p. 38). He should then return to the pavement round the tank and visit the Athsath Tírath and Dukh Bharjni bathing-places on the west side (pp. 17-18). Turning then to the north he can see the Rámgarhia búnga (p. 15), the Brahmabhúta Akhara (pp. 16), the Malwái and Ahluwália búngas and the school of Bhai Rai Singh (p. 17). After this he will have completed the circuit of the tank, and will find himself under the clock tower from which he started.



Any reader wishing to communicate to the writer any remarks of interest regarding the temple is cordially invited to do so. The author will also be ready to answer to the best of his ability any enquiry that may be addressed to him on the subject of the temple or the Sikh religion.

— SKETCH OF THE PRECINCTS —
— OF THE —
— GOLDEN TEMPLE —



